

Madame la Ministre,
Your Excellency, Madam Ambassador of Germany in France,
Mister the NASA Attaché to the US Embassy in Paris,
Monsieur le Recteur de l'Académie de Paris,
Monsieur le Président de l'Observatoire,
Madame la Directrice de la Classe des Sciences de l'Académie
royale de Belgique,
Chers collègues, chers confrères, chères consœurs, et chers
amis,

It is a tremendous honor for me to be nominated Doctor
Honoris Causa of Paris Observatory. I am deeply touched and I
thank you so much!

It is not a secret, to succeed in my carrier, I have been working
and working a lot and with passion, I am engaged in science, I
have tried to maintain an equilibrium in my life and I have been
collaborating with colleagues in other countries, France is the
first on the list. These words (*much working, passion,
engagement, equilibrium, collaboration*) are the only key words
of my speech and I will address them in reverse order.

First "collaboration": one can never do research alone, this time
is over. Interdisciplinarity and collaboration are words that must
be in all project proposals and in the day-to-day life of a
scientific researcher! At the Royal Observatory of Belgium, I am
responsible for the Operational Direction "Reference Systems
and Planetary Science" and I have the chance of having a very
good team in which all individual scientists have a key role and
each is a pillar for reaching our objectives. This is similar for the
national projects in which I am involved. And at the international
level, I have been and I am involved in many collaborations of
which the most fruitful one is with the Paris Observatory. I have
been working and I am working with several scientists of Paris

Observatory, in particular Nicole Capitaine, Athena Coustenis (who is at the DPAS for getting a medal also!), William Thuillot and others, and also with common colleagues and friends like Marta Folgueira from Spain. At the Royal Observatory of Belgium, we have hosted several postdocs from Paris Observatory (Christian Bizouard, Sébastien Lambert, Valery Lainey, Nicolas Rambaux) who are hired here at Paris Observatory and it is an immense pleasure to see how well they have evolved.

Second key word "equilibrium": Also, if I can tell confidences, collaborations in science is not the only ingredients for a work success. There is as well the equilibrium of life, a theme which is often discussed when young women are asking themselves or even ask me about their future. Is it possible to have a carrier and to have as well a family? Yes, it is definitely very possible but having a good partner is essential. And I have and had a good partner, my husband Guy, who also partly deserves this nomination of Doctor Honoris Causa. I have had nice children, a nice family and very good and true friends. Some of them are here and I want to warmly thank them, particularly my friends Veronique Pipers, Marta Folgueira and André Berger who are present today.

Third key word "passion": in the day-to-day life, I always promote the importance of science and the importance of passion in science. In the equation $\text{Performance} = \text{Motivation/passion} \times \text{Skills}$, as skills are naturally still increasing, we should continuously ensure a top motivation. I promote this for both woman and man but I want especially to convince every women that science is possible, compatible with a women life. Science is not reserved for a happy few women like me today... Passion of science is part of a general scientific

state of mind that one should adopt: being curious, try to understand more and more, try to be innovative...

Fourth key word: “engagement”. One generally wants, I want, to do things that engage me completely, and in addition of being passionate, I am a woman of projects, commitments and responsibilities, which implies a *“lot of work”*, *the fifth keyword*. These key words are especially true in the present-day situation of financial restrictions, no matter whether you are doing fundamental or applied research. In order to echo or respond a little bit to what the Director of the Science Class of the Royal Academy of Belgium, Claude Tomberg, said, supporting basic research requires a daring investment in the long-term, while recognizing the difficulties in measuring the direct and indirect impacts.

So the take away message, mostly for the young generation, is for all to stay involved in your field with passion, stay curious try to be innovative, and stay a woman/a man, a mother/a father, a daughter/a son, and a friend.

The take away message for our politicians is please dare to invest in fundamental research, because we have the passion, we engage ourselves and want to continue to perform in scientific research or education for paving the future.

Thank you so much to all of you and today in particular to the Observatoire de Paris.